

STATINTL

Capital Letter:

Can't Laugh at Red Peril

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By RUTH MONTGOMERY

WASHINGTON: Senator Thomas J. Dodd has returned from the Far East fired with a mission.

That mission is to persuade the Kennedy Administration that SEATO must send troops immediately to rescue Laos from the Communists. The Connecticut Democrat is convinced that unless this is done quickly, all Asia will be lost to the Free World.

The sound of derisive laughter is still ringing hollowly in his ears. It came in the midst of a speech that he was delivering to the Asian People's Anti-Communist League in Manila earlier this month.

Nearly 3,000 delegates and scholars from all free parts of Asia and Africa sat in the huge auditorium at the University of St. Thomas. These people were our friends, solidly arrayed with the Western world against Russian and Chinese communism.

Dodd, whose own anti-Communist record is well known, was the opening speaker at the vast conclave. After a few introductory remarks, he said his most important item of news was that "America is now awake." He dated this moment from President Kennedy's speech on Cuba before the American Society of Newspaper Editors.

He read several quotes from that speech, and then said: "What President Kennedy's statement signifies is that the period of blunder and slumber, of retreats and defeats, is now at an end."

Dodd had rather expected some applause at this point. Instead, a wave of derisive laughter swept the hall. Asians, Arabs and Africans who hate communism as bitterly as any of us were derisively laughing at the claim by a U.S. Senator that America has now ended the "blunder, slumber, retreats and defeats."



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The Democratic solon, momentarily angered by the response, laid aside his prepared text and snapped: "Now let me tell you something. This happens to be the facts."

His listeners politely straightened their faces, and Dodd completed his address. Afterwards, the baffled Senator asked our State Department people whether the translator could have misquoted his remarks.

Shaking their heads, they said in effect: "No, the translation was completely accurate. This is what we are getting all the time, since the fiasco in Cuba, and our retreat in Laos."

Dodd talked to the foreign minister of the Philippines, who asked him in so many words: "What is the matter with your country? Are you going to let the Communists swallow piecemeal all of Asia? We are ready to supply an army to stop the Communist drive in Laos. Just give us some leadership."

The Democratic legislator said he heard much the same story from every statesman and leader he talked with in Asia. "Formosa, Pakistan, Thailand, Australia and New Zealand are all itching to send troops," he said. "Why don't we say the word?"

Dodd blames British and French influence for America's failure. Pointing out the parallel between World War II, he said, "Hitler came back and appeased while Hitler swallowed one country after another. Now they are trying to force us to do the same with communism."

Dodd said the "human fiasco" of our continuing retreat in Laos has lost us tremendous facts in the Orient. Everywhere, Asians asked him: "Can you expect people to rely on you when you abandon your friends?"

The member of the Foreign Relations Committee believes we should call on SEATO to send troops to Laos, instigate a blockade of Red China, and walk out of the Laos talks at Geneva where the Communists hold all the trumps.

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